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ANENT PSYCHOPHYSICAL PARALLELISM.¹

By EDMUND MONTGOMERY.

In order to overcome in this connection the repugnance naturally attaching to the seemingly materialistic view, that our conscious content is a functional outcome of what is perceived as our organism, it may be well to recognize on what actual foundation the apparently trenchant dualism of body and mind is in reality based.

Let, then, a definite conscious content arise out of latent memory to fill the actual moment of awareness of a certain subject perceived by an outside observer. This conscious content will be all in all that is directly and subjectively revealed or present to him. On the same occasion in the outside observer, on the other hand, through roundabout means of definite sensorial stimulation, an entirely different conscious content correspondingly arises. He distinctly perceives a body or organism, and would, in case his vision happened to be sufficiently penetrating, moreover, become aware that in the brain of the perceptually revealed organism there is occurring a definite functional commotion.

From this undeniable state of things it follows, that the perceptual organism within the conscious content of the observer cannot possibly belong to the observed subject, cannot be the subject's real organic being. Nor can the perceived functional brain-commotion, forming likewise part of the observer's conscious content, be the real functional activity which is causing the emergence of the totally different conscious content in the observed subject. Hence the irreconcilable duality of body and mind. For what is here called the bodily organism is really a percept which may form part of the conscious content of any outside observer, or of any number of such observers. While what is here called mind is the exclusive conscious awareness of the observed subject. In this light it becomes evident why such a body cannot emanate mind, and why such mind cannot move or actuate what is perceived as body.

The observed subject can, of course, likewise become aware of the perceptual body, just as the observer, by means of sense-

¹Extract from an unpublished work entitled "Philosophical Problems in the Light of Vital Organization."

stimulation. It is true, this body, though forming equally with other bodies part of his conscious content, is felt quite particularly to belong to himself. This, however, is due to inner or organic sensations spatially corroborating the externally stimulated sensations of sight and touch. I feel by means of inner sensations what is called my hand to be occupying a definite position in space. Through sight and touch this inner experience is corroborated in perceptual awareness, and *vice versa*. But the perceived body or organism is here, also, like all other perceived bodies, only a transient constituent of the conscious content, and is nowise the real organic being.

From the same actual state of things it can be furthermore rightly concluded, that it is an extra-conscious activity within the extra-conscious being of the perceptually revealed subject, which causes his own moment of awareness to be filled with a definite conscious content, and which simultaneously causes to arise in the observer's perceptual awareness a corresponding functional brain-commotion. The observed subject's conscious content is thus proved to be a functional outcome of his real extra-conscious being, and not of that which is only vicariously and symbolically revealed as the perceptual organism forming part of the observer's conscious content.

The perceptual organism and its functional brain-commotion within the observer's conscious content has obviously nothing whatever to do with what actually occurs within the observed subject. It has no effective influence on the same, although it vicariously and symbolically reveals the presence, characteristics and activities of the real extra-conscious being of the observed subject.

It is clear, moreover, that the perceptual organism, forming part of the conscious content of the observer, is not only not a material body, as is generally taken for granted, but that it is, on the contrary, out and out of the same forceless, evanescent, psychic consistency as the transient conscious content of the observed subject. There obtains here absolutely no duality of nature between mind and body, for the organism actually and bodily perceived is just as much a psychic phenomenon as the conscious content of the observed subject.

It is evident, however, that the perceptual organism and its definite brain-commotion is aroused in the observer by stimulating influences emanating from the real power-endowed, extra-conscious subject he is observing, and that it reveals therewith with vivid precision, though vicariously and symbolically in terms of perceptual consciousness, its presence, characteristics and activities.

As to the observed subject's own conscious content, consisting, as it does of a complex of feelings, sensations, perceptions,

emotions, volitions and thoughts, it is like all modes of consciousness utterly forceless and evanescent, a mere content of lapsing time with no power whatever to stimulate the senses of observers, or to influence other existents in any direct manner. A being consisting of nothing but what is actually experienced as psychical would be wholly imperceptible to observers, wholly non-existent and non-efficient.

The epistemological explanation here given of the apparent duality of body and mind, notwithstanding their real sameness of nature as being both mere conscious phenomena; this explanation based on undeniable facts solves an ancient and obdurate riddle, and renders evident that it is a real extra-conscious, power-endowed existent perceptually revealed as our organism, that is the veritable bearer, veritable actuating matrix and manifesting agent of our all-revealing conscious content. This, our real being emits directly, from within, our own conscious content; and indirectly, through roundabout external sense-stimulation, it compels also its perceptual representation in observers.

The observer's perceptual awareness of the organic body constitutes its physical sense-stimulated aspect. And it is this perceptual organism which is the direct object of biological research. A biological investigator has consciously before him as direct object of research only his own sense-stimulated percepts. If these did not reveal the real existence of an extra-conscious being, he would then be investigating nothing but his own unaccountably arising conscious states, and pure solipsistic phenomenalism would be the consistent outcome of such a state of things.

The all-revealing conscious content, within whose moment of actual awareness may become microcosmically concentrated a vast complex of remembered experience, inclusive of social and ethical consciousness, constitutes the stupendous object of introspective investigation, and this regardless of the assistance of directly sense-stimulated awareness; save, indeed, that of silently self-articulated linguistic signs. By remembering thus the experience denoted and connoted by the linguistic or conceptual signs, latently gathered and systematized knowledge can be ratiocinatively summoned into actual awareness. And this has been the all but exclusive method of rationalistic philosophy, inclusive of rationalistic psychology.

Another introspective method of psychological interpretation has lately been attempted, one of an extreme phenomenalist nature. Analyzing the conscious content, as such, irrespective of what its constituent elements denote, connote or signalize beyond themselves, the juggling effort is made to extract rational, nature-explaining sense out of their own direct

relations, as they are actually composing the conscious content. In the conscious content there arises, however, a medley of more or less disconnected phenomena which have no rational meaning or import whatever in themselves. A fictitious permanency and efficacy is here, as in the Association-Philosophy, attributed to single segregated constituents of the conscious content, while in reality the entire moment of conscious awareness is a forceless flowing and evanescent phenomenon in time, which has from moment to moment to be renewed through functional activity of our extra-conscious being. But even by taking the conscious phenomena of succeeding moments of time, perceptual bodies for instance, as identically abiding existents; even then phenomenalist psychology can make no sense of mere conscious phenomena. The visually revealed perceptual organism, for instance, is in itself nothing but a definite complex of peculiarly shaded and colored spatial forms. In what rational relation can it possibly stand as such to other perceptual bodies simultaneously perceived; to a perceptual dinner, for example, consisting likewise of definitely shaded and colored spatial forms? All phenomena forming part of the conscious content receive their rational meaning by denoting, connoting or signaling something beyond their own phenomenal existence. Even a mere feeling of pain or any mere organic sensation; conscious states these which are of all the components of the conscious content the least indicative of something beyond themselves; these even refer to definite occurrences within the extra-conscious organic being, which occurrences may become perceptually revealed. And these sensations may also revive the remembered perceptual appearance or the representative idea of the organ in which the feeling or sensation arises; the tooth which pains, the heart which beats. One and all conscious states rationally imply something beyond themselves, which they consciously signalize.

There is still another, and this the most positive method of psychological investigation, which may also prove to be the most instructive; the method, namely, employed in experimental psychology or so-called psychophysics. Here the experimenter has before him the vital organism of a conscious subject, together with an array of sense-stimulating devices. All this forms, as perceived by him, part of his conscious content signaling real extra-conscious existents. And he is himself ready to use all requisite faculties of his extra-conscious being in order to gain psychological knowledge by means of experimentation. His aim is to induce definite psychic reactions or responses in the observed subject, whose senses he is stimulating in specific ways.

The difficulties and complexities in the way of this experi-

mental method may be appreciated by considering that the sense-compelled percepts, their attentive apprehension, the comprehension of their significance, the awakening thereby of organically associated conscious phenomena from out the vast store of remembered experience, which phenomena may be of more or less mere individual import; all this commingles here within the observed subject severely to tax the ingenuity and acumen of the experimenter. And he has nothing to base his judgments upon but the voluntary motor signals given by the observed subject, which he has, moreover, to interpret introspectively by means of his own conscious experience.

Psychology may legitimately use three different sources of information, which corroborate one another in the interpretation of the conscious content, whose present moment of awareness contains all we actually experience. The psychologist can introspectively analyze this all-revealing conscious content into its component constituents, such as feelings, sensations, perceptions, volitions, emotions and thoughts or ideas; or more succinctly into affections, cognitions and conations. And by reviving memorized and systematized experience by means of linguistic signs, he is able logically to deduce particular facts of experience from conceptual generalizations. This consciously remembered system of experience receives, however, its real significance from referring to extra-conscious existents and occurrences inside and outside the conscious being. The sensation of hunger, for instance, indicates an inner organic need; sense-compelled percepts the presence and characteristics of outside existents.

The second source from which psychology may derive most important information is that of compelled perceptual awareness, which reveals vividly the extra-conscious organic being, with the vital structures and functions whence the conscious content arises. Here direct experimentation elicits definite vital functional reactions on definite incitement. And by eliminating definite vital structures it gains instructive information, not only of physiological, but also of psychological import.

The third source of information is that afforded by the conscious subject when exposed to psychophysical experimenting and questioning.

The first source of information can be amplified by taking children and defectives under consideration. The second and third by comparing results attainable throughout the entire scale of animal life.

By judiciously utilizing all three sources of information a correct scientific interpretation of our all-revealing, but utterly forceless and phenomenal, conscious content may in time be attained. It can be fully understood, however, only as signal-

izing real modes of existence beyond itself, and as being a functional outcome of the vital organization of our real, extra-conscious, power-endowed being, which is the only genuinely substantial being in nature. For it alone has the power to reintegrate itself to essential identity of structure and function under a constant flow of change, without which identical restitution there would be no coherence nor steadfastness in life, in mind, and in the nature we have conscious awareness of.

It is the sense-revealed vital being that feels itself and its organic needs from within; that perceives itself and its environment by means of sense-stimulation, that is emotionally moved by recognition or anticipation of the sources of its pleasures and pains; that volitionally actuates its purposive movements in order to attain fruition or avoid danger; that concentrates within its momentary thought the systematized results of remembered past experience as guidance for its present and future conduct.